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SENATOR McMANUS INTRODUCES ANTI-HAZING LEGISLATION

LANSING – A pair of bills, introduced into the Michigan Senate yesterday by Sen. Michelle McManus (R-Lake Leelanau), would make involvement in hazing rituals that result in injury or death a crime, punishable by either jail time or fines.

“Hazing is not just ‘kids being kids,’ it is a serious crime that preys on students during a particularly vulnerable time in their lives,” said McManus. “We have all experienced what it feels like to want to belong, and it is just wrong to have to endure a dangerous and potentially deadly ‘rite’ to be part of a group.”

The legislation came about from a number of recent hazing incidents, including the death of a Ferris State University student, who died in 2000 after consuming 27 shots of alcohol as part of a hazing for a fraternity.

A hazing incident resulting in injury would be a misdemeanor, while one resulting in death would be considered a felony. Penalties would include jail time or fines. Hazing victims would not be punished, even if they willingly participated in the hazing. In addition, student consent as a defense in hazing cases is removed.

Michigan is one of just eight states without anti-hazing legislation. Senate Bills 783 and 784 have been referred to the Senate Committee on Judiciary.